

CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
13 July 1985ARTICLE APPEARED  
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# U.S. wary on aid to Cambodia

By Terry Atlas  
Chicago Tribune

BANG PU, Thailand—For 55,000 Cambodians, home for now is a place known as Site 7. It is little more than a cluster of thatched-roof bamboo huts and dirt roads that in a few weeks will be abandoned as its people are made to assemble their few possessions and move again.

The Cambodians at Site 7, a temporary refugee camp, face an uncertain and dangerous future. And so does the United States, which is slowly stepping up its support for the noncommunist Cambodian resistance, despite fears 10 years after the fall of Saigon that it may be drawn into a new war in Indochina.

In all, an estimated 250,000 men, women and children have been driven across the border into the sanctuary of Thailand by the fierce fighting this spring between Cambodian resistance forces and Vietnamese troops who occupy their country.

"We have been shelled, attacked and overrun by the Vietnamese," said Thou Thon, a senior official with the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, one of the two noncommunist resistance groups.

Yet, he says, the people here are the lucky ones. "Those of us who are still inside Cambodia ... are being killed, robbed; women and their daughters are being raped; men and boys are forced to carry arms," he said.

Their plight is part of the seemingly unending tragedy of Cambodia, where as many as 2 million people died in the "killing fields" of Pol Pot before he was driven out by the Vietnamese invasion in 1978.

Since then, the Vietnamese have installed their own puppet government in Phnom Penh, tried to crush militarily the fragmented resistance to its occupation, clashed with defending troops next door in Thailand, and rejected calls for a negotiated settlement.

Secretary of State George Shultz went Tuesday to Site 7, a few miles from the border, where the whole camp turned out to give him a hero's welcome.

The visit was more than a symbolic show of support for the Cambodians, who cheered Shultz loudly amid chants of "U.S. No. 1." Rather, it marked a shift in American policy toward a more active role in backing efforts, both military and diplomatic, to end Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia.

The House, reflecting growing American concern about the Cambodian situation, this week joined the Senate in authorizing \$5 million in economic or military aid next year for the Cambodian resistance. But approval of the measure, proposed by Rep. Stephen Solarz (D.,

N.Y.), came only after some heated debate by those fearful of another American Vietnam.

Shultz said the money will be used to increase humanitarian assistance to the displaced Cambodians, and he was openly reluctant about supplying military equipment.

"I think that the military aid is available and can be available from other countries in the region," he said. "And the kind of assistance we've been able to provide ... for food, for clothing, for medicine, for things people need just as much as they need weapons, is a better role for us."

For some time, the U.S. has been encouraging China and other countries in the region, which American officials believe have the most at stake, to help meet the military needs of the resistance fighters. And the CIA, reportedly, has been sending some nonlethal aid.

Most of the world rejects the current Hanoi-backed government of Heng Samrin in Phnom Penh and supports the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea [Cambodia]. That coalition is an uneasy alliance of the communist Khmer Rouge, still led by Pol Pot, the noncommunist Khmer People's National Liberation Front and the noncommunist forces of former head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

In Bangkok, Shultz met with Gen. Sak Sutsakhan of the liberation front and Prince Norodom Ranariddh, who heads forces loyal to his father, Sihanouk.

Their forces, totaling about 25,000, have been less effective against the Vietnamese than the larger force of Khmer Rouge, which are supported by China.

The two commanders told Shultz that, after major military defeats this spring, their two armies have recently begun for the first time to coordinate their military plans closely under the overall command of Gen. Sak. They said that the noncommunist resistance, since losing its bases inside Cambodia, is changing military strategy to emphasize hit-and-run attacks deep inside Cambodia.

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